

GENERAL ORDER**No. 03.26****PEER SUPPORT SERVICES**

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REEVALUATION: ANNUAL

LAST REVIEW: N/A

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ISSUING AUTHORITY: JOHN F. TEDESCO, CHIEF OF POLICE

I. Purpose:

To provide emotional support during and after times of personal or professional crisis to employees and their family members who express a need for assistance.

II. Policy:

The Troy Police Department is committed to developing the wellness of its workforce by making peer support services (PSS) available as a means to assist employees and their families with emotional, familial, social, psychological and work related issues or problems. Peer support services is an internal resource that augments other outreach services such as the Employee Assistance Program, psychological or psychiatric services, as well as medical and legal services.

Peer Support Services is a program that offers assistance and appropriate support resources to employees when personal or professional problems adversely affect their work performance, family or self.

- A. The Peer Support Team (PST) is comprised of trained department members who voluntarily commit to assisting colleagues and their families with support services in order to reduce employee distress and to assist in diffusing a crisis before its escalation. PST members are not counselors or therapists.
- B. PST members are intimately familiar with the agency culture and are more apt to relate to employees with behavioral problems and attitudes.
- C. The purpose of PST is to provide emotional support during times of personal and professional crisis.
- D. The program assists employees and members who initially may be reluctant to receive professional mental health assistance, or who need a third party intermediary to assist them during stressful times.
- E. PST members will be able to assist and refer individuals to professional services for additional assistance if a member desires such assistance.
- F. The goals are to proactively assist in prevention of the chronic stress to employees and to promote employee wellness.

III. Procedure:

A. Selection:

1. PST participation is voluntary and open to agency members at the ranks of sergeant or patrolman. Members interested in joining the unit must submit their interest in writing to the commanding officer of the PST.
2. Retired agency members, clergy representatives and mental health workers compliment the PST as a resource, or referral when warranted.
3. Department members can also nominate an individual for PST during an announcement or posting period.
4. The Chief of Police, in consultation with the commanding officer of the PST, may remove any PST member who:
 - a. Breaches confidentiality in any manner whatsoever.
 - b. Fails to attend required training or training deemed necessary by the commanding officer or Chief of Police.
 - c. Fails to maintain their good standing with the department.
 - d. Acts in a manner that is inconsistent with their position as a PST member.

B. Training:

1. Prior to being certified in peer support services, nominees must successfully complete training in these subject areas:
 - a. Developing active listening skills.
 - b. Recognizing and assisting with problems.
 - c. Determining the need for referral.
 - d. Dealing with death.
 - e. Dealing with relationship issues.
 - f. Stress management.
 - g. Ethical issues.
 - h. Alcohol/ substance abuse.
 - i. Domestic violence.

- j. Suicide assessment.
- k. Crisis Management.
- l. Understanding the limitations of peer support services.
- 2. Training shall be coordinated by the Team Leader. This position is responsible for developing and instituting initial training and supplemental training as needed.

C. Administration:

- 1. The Planning & Analysis captain is the PST commanding officer, and is responsible for oversight and team support.
- 2. The Team Leader shall be the ranking team member, and this position is responsible for the daily operations of the PST, including but not limited to:
 - a. Peer support training.
 - b. Liaison duties with agency unions, Mental Health staff, clergy, and retirees.

D. Access to Peer Support Services:

- 1. The decision to enlist the aid of peer counseling is voluntary. No member of the Troy Police Department shall be mandated in any manner whatsoever to participate in such services. A listing of all certified PST members and their contact information shall be available at all times to department employees.
- 2. An employee or immediate family member may contact a PST member directly at any time for an appointment to meet.

E. Confidentiality:

- 1. Discussions that take place involving peer services session shall be considered confidential between the parties, unless:
 - a. The dialogue consists of admissions to criminal activity or behavior such as, but not limited to, child abuse, domestic violence, or any form of criminal misconduct, in which case the discussion will terminate and the employee will be referred to their union representative, or legal counsel.
 - b. There is reason to believe that the individual poses an immediate threat to him/herself or others.
 - c. The individual seeking peer services is known to be directly involved in an incident which is under investigation by the Inspectional Services Bureau (union representative being the exception), unless otherwise authorized by the Chief of Police.

2. Written notes, audio, or video recordings of peer services sessions are prohibited.
3. PST personnel will advise department members of the confidentiality policy as stated herein prior to the start of each meeting.
4. In the event of a disclosure during a peer services session that conflicts with the confidentiality policy, the PST member will immediately notify the Team Leader.

F. Referrals to the Peer Services Team:

1. Supervisors, command personnel, or incident command managers, should suggest that members access peer services when involved in the following:
 - a. Officer involved shootings.
 - b. Witness to suicides or attempted suicides.
 - c. Witnessed deaths.
 - d. Crisis Debriefing.
 - e. Being the victim of an assault.
 - f. Crimes against children.
 - g. Death of an employee.
 - h. Child pornography or innocent images exposure.
 - i. Any situation that would create a significant amount of employee stress or crisis.

Note: Referrals to a PST member should not supersede a referral to the Employee Assistance Program; any aforementioned incidents that involve the notification of Inspectional Services Bureau will be referred to the Chief of Police for approval.

G. VIII: Annual Review:

1. A mental health professional should be present at team meetings for professional feedback and training.
2. The Planning & Analysis captain will submit an annual report to the Chief of Police evaluating the effectiveness of the Peer Support team's interactions. The report shall not contain the names of any persons utilizing this service.

H. EMERGENCY CONTACT FORMS (ECF-1)

1. To ensure timely and appropriate notifications when a department member suffers a serious injury, death or is affected by a serious illness, all sworn members of the Troy Police Department are required to complete an Emergency Contact Form.
 - The information contained within the Emergency Contact Form is confidential. No department members other than the submitting officer and captain of Planning & Analysis are authorized to duplicate the original form without authorization of the Chief of Police or his designee.
2. The Emergency Contact Form template is stored on the H-Drive. Current members are required to complete a ECF-1 within 14 calendar days of the effective date of this order. Recruit officers will complete an ECF-1 at the time of their initial processing.
3. Completed forms shall be submitted to the member's commanding officer for review. The review shall ensure legibility and thoroughness. Commanding officers shall forward approved forms to Planning & Analysis for filing.
4. The Planning & Analysis captain will forward one duplicate copy of each ECF-1 to the Central Desk for retrieval, or viewing upon request of a department member; such request is limited to the requesting member's submission.
 - Requests by anyone other than a department member shall be forwarded to the Chief of Police.
5. Changes to the ECF-1 may be made at any time. All members are strongly encouraged to review the information on their forms each year.